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Rev. N. J. Halpin read a paper on certain passages in the life of Edmund Spenser.

In bringing this subject before the Academy, Mr. Halpin lamented the slovenly biography which had hitherto left unexamined and undetected,—though given with sufficient certainty in his own works,—the name and family of the lady to whom Edmund Spenser was married; and not only her, but, perhaps, the most celebrated name in English amatory poetry, that of the fair and false Rosalinde, for whom, in his youth, he entertained a deep but ill-requited passion. The names of both were recorded in his own works, after a method at that time much practised by the poets, and of which the learned Camden, in his *Remaines*, has laid down the laws, viz., by the Anagram; and though both the names thus lay close beneath the surface of his poems, they have both remained there to the present day undiscovered, but prepared to reward the pains of the more caretaking inquirer.

In the series of sonnets called the *Amoretti*, the name and circumstances of his wife are expressly celebrated; those of his earlier flame, the fickle Rosalinde, in his *Shepherd's Calendar*, each expressly written for its peculiar purpose. But of both his passions we have occasional notices throughout his *Faerie Queen*, his *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*, and his *Epithalamion*, in all of which the allusions to those ladies respectively are unmistakeably transparent. But inasmuch as the clue to the real secret is given by the ostensible editor (whoever he may have been, whether Spenser himself; or his friend, Gabriel Harvey, the Hobinal of the poem; or a genuine, though anonymous E. K.) of the *Shepherd's Calendar*, it will be most convenient to take it *first* in order, and to ascertain, by its methods, who the lady was that figures under the title of

ROSALINDE.*

We are told expressly by the editorial E. K. that “ Rosa-

* So spelled in the original editions.

linde also is a feigned name, which, being well-ordered, will bewray the very name of his (Spenser's) love and mistress." The editors and biographers (Malone amongst the rest) have accordingly conjectured this to be the anagrammatic name either of "Rose Linde" or "Eliza Horden," families of people with those surnames having been found resident in Kent in the reign of Henry VI. But besides the remoteness of the period assigned,—some five or six reigns before the birth of our rustic beauty,—the conjectures are of no value, because the authors of them are unable to show between the principal parties any connexion or acquaintance, any courtship, or contiguity of residence, which might have brought them within the ordinary sphere of attraction. The notion, then, so far from being probable, contains nothing beyond the crude elements of a barren possibility.

But Spenser, at this time, had an intimate and beloved friend and brother poet, Samuel Daniel (see enumeration of English poets in *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*), and this Samuel Daniel had a sister named Rose,—Rose Daniel; and *Rose Daniel* reads anagrammatically, and in perfect accordance with Camden's rules, into ROSALINDE. She was, probably about the date of the Shepherd's Calender, married to a friend of her brother's; not, indeed, to Spenser, but to a scholar of much celebrity in his time, but, withal, so eccentric as to have left behind him, in his scanty biography, traces so durable as to enable us to interpret with reference to him passages in the works of Spenser, which were otherwise unintelligible at this distance of time.

The reading of *Rosalinde* into ROSE DANIEL gives an easy and probable solution to the whole tale of Spenser's disappointed passion, as recorded by himself. It exactly rounds the anagram. The intimacy between her brother and Spenser accounts for her first acquaintance with the poet; her marriage with a rival defines the species of infidelity of which her lover complains; and her subsequent fortunes, arising from her marriage with a very wayward man, correspond, with surprising

exactness, with the allegorical descriptions, with which the ungenerous author of the *Faerie Queen* loves to persecute her and her husband, and prosecute his own unmanly revenge. The principal of those invidious attacks on her will be found in the episode of *Mirabella*, with whom Rosalinde is identified in the *Faerie Queen*, book vi. c. 6, st. 16, 17 ; and book vii. c. 6, st. 27, &c., down to stanza the thirty-first of the eighth canto; and again, with especial reference to her husband, in the *Faerie Queen*, book i. c. 7, throughout which the character of *Orgoglio* ("sib," or relative to the Carl Disdain of the seventh canto of the sixth book), is given with much, though deserved, acrimony.

The person to whom Rose Daniel, or *Rosalinde*, was actually married, was the celebrated JOHN FLORIO, the author of several works of considerable merit, such as the *New (or Queen Anne's) World of Words*, an Anglo-Italian Dictionary; his *First and Second Fruits*, a translation into English of Montaigne's *Essays*, &c., &c. He was, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, highly respected by the nobility, as a teacher of languages; and in the subsequent reign of James I. he was appointed one of the tutors of Prince Henry, and Gentleman of the Privy Chamber, reader of Italian, &c., to Anne of Denmark, the royal consort. But he was a man of the most capricious and irritable temper, ever at war with his literary contemporaries, and the perpetual butt of their raillery and ridicule,—particularly of the dramatic poets, to whom he appears to have given the first offence, and by whom he was mercilessly "staged" for his pedantry, affectation, and ugliness.

It would be impossible here to state at length the several proofs and details of those curious circumstances which Mr. Halpin has brought forward from the remains of the contemporary literature and the discoveries of modern critics; suffice it to say, that John Florio, the "RESOLUTE" (the constant prefix to his name, as subscribed by himself to all his prefaces,

preludes, and addresses), appears to have been not only the MENALCAS* of the Spenser's Shepherd's Calendar, who had "under-fonged" the faithless Rosalinde, but also the HOLOERNES, and DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO of Shakespeare's more laughable satire, in his Love's Labour Lost.

Having thus identified *Rose Daniel* with *Rosalinde*, and *Rosalinde* with *Mirabella*, by means of their respective union with the same person identified as *John Florio* (or the Resolute), *Menalcas* in the Shepherd's Calendar, and the *Carl Disdain* in the Faerie Queen, Mr. Halpin proceeds to sum up the results of Spenser's first disappointed passion in the following words:

"Whatever happiness poor Rose Daniel may have enjoyed in the domestic virtues and real talents of such a husband as Florio, it is certain that, if she were a sensible and sensitive woman, she must have experienced great pain and annoyance from the ridicule and hostility to which his pride, petulance, and ill-temper constantly exposed him in public. In this respect her sufferings seem to have fed the vengeance of her discarded, but unforgiving and ungenerous suitor. But she may have had her consolations, too. Florio was highly esteemed by the nobility of Elizabeth's days, and was favoured in the Court of James I. That he was an attached and affectionate husband, his last will and testament gives ample and touching evidence (see "*New Illustrations of Shakespeare, by the Rev. Joseph Hunter*, vol. ii. p. 280)."

* This name is, from its Greek derivation, homonymous with "the Resolute." It need hardly be observed that it is derived from *μενος* and *αλη*, both signifying modifications of force, mental or bodily. They are repeatedly used together as equivalents, thus, *μενος δ' αλης τε λαθωμαι*. II. z. 265. In Liddel and Scott's edition of Passow's Greek-English Lexicon, *μενος* in composition is said to "bear always a collateral notion of *resolve* and *firmness*:" and here we have the very notion expressed by the very word we want. MENALCAS is, therefore, the appropriate and expressive *nom de guerre* of the RESOLUTE.

In the second branch of his essay, Mr. Halpin treats of the name and family of

SPENSER'S WIFE,

or the Irish lady to whom, as appears from the most beautiful and spirited of all hymeneal songs, the *Epithalamion*, he was ultimately married. Further than that her Christian name (as revealed by the poet) was Elizabeth, the biographers are at a stand still. Without an exception, they all coincide in the obvious error that she was "a person of inferior rank,—a country lass;" but, in Mr. Halpin's opinion, she was no more "a country lass," in the ordinary sense of the terms, than Spenser himself,—late Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, and even then, Clerk of the Council of Munster,—was "a shepherd's boy." Had the biographers even slightly consulted that portion of the poet's works expressly written to record his passion, the *Amoretti*, they would have found she was "a lady" whose rank was rather "disparaged" than exalted by her "sorting" with him; that she was a person of good birth and station, well educated, accomplished in the arts of design and embroidery (accomplishments not usually found in an Irish peasant's daughter), enjoying the respect, the elegancies, if not the luxuries, of her condition, and resident in the poet's own neighbourhood; in whose house (or her father's) the poet himself was no unfrequent visitor. (See *Sonnets, passim*). In fact, her family mansion must evidently have lain on the banks of the Mulla Water, Spenser's favourite stream, a tributary of the Black Water, somewhere between Kilcolman Castle and the prosperous sea-port of Youghal, but considerably nearer to the former. This brings our inquiries within narrow limits, namely, the range bordering on the Mulla. But Spenser had expressly promised the lady, in three several sonnets (see Son. 73, 75, and 82) to *eternize her name*, and we have no right to doubt but that he fulfilled his engagement. If, then, we assume him to have proceeded, as in the case of his

former mistress, recording his passion, but concealing its object, by means of the anagram ; and if we can fix upon any distinctive epithet, common to the several poems celebrating her person, and solvable into the name of a person whose residence and circumstances correspond with those ascribed to her by her worshipper, we obtain a distinct clue to the long-lost secret.

In the *Amoretti*, the *Epithalamion*, and the *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*, we find the object of the poet's most passionate cares distinctively and energetically, with all the emphasis of Italic letters and Capital initials (in all the original editions at least), addressed or spoken of as "an *Angel*," as of one

Divinely wrought,
And of the *brood* of *Angels* heavenly born,
And with the *crew* of *blessed saints* up brought,

in no less than thirteen or fourteen remarkable passages.

But the perpetual recurrence to the same epithet would be too trite and common-place for the invention, or the rich vocabulary, of such a poet as Spenser, if "no more were meant than meets the eye ;" and probably the reader anticipates, by this time, that the true name concealed under this anagram is NAGLE, or (as in a subsequent sonnet—lxxiv.—we are informed of her christian name) *Elizabeth Nagle*.

What seems to confirm this conjecture almost into a certainty is, that in the immediate neighbourhood of Kilcolman there resided a family whose name and circumstances correspond precisely with those which have now been elicited from the poems written by Spenser on the occasion of his courtship and marriage. The *Nagles* or *Nangles* were a very ancient sept in the counties of Cork and Waterford. There were two races of them, distinguished by the colour of their hair into the *Red* and the *Black*. Of the former, the chief or head resided at *Moneannymy*, an ancient preceptory of the Knights

of St. John, beautifully seated on the banks of the Mulla, and at a convenient distance for frequent visits from Kilcolman ; and of this family Elizabeth was most probably a member, the colour of her hair corresponding with their's, and resembling "a golden mantle." (See Son. lxxxi. and Epithal. st. 9). The family name is assumed by Heralds to be derived *ab Angulo*, as *Hugo ab Angulo*, an ancestor of the Nagles or Nangles ; but Spenser seems to have drawn it (according to a precedent of his own in the Faerie Queen, see book iii. canto iii. stan. 54, 55), more poetically *de Angelis*, when he describes Elizabeth as "of the brood of ANGELS heavenly born."

It is no objection to this view that Spenser's eldest son, Sylvanus, was subsequently married to a Miss Ellen Nagle of the same family ; for the intermarriage of first cousins is no unusual occurrence ; and Miss Ellen Nagle was the daughter of David Nagle, who was, in all probability, the brother of the Elizabeth Nagle whom we suppose to have been married to Edmund Spenser. The circumstances of the country, too, at the time of Sylvanus Spenser's marriage, were likely to circumscribe the choice of a young man, in the selection of a wife, within very narrow limits.

It only remains to be here remarked, that, after Edmund Spenser's death, his widow was married again to a person named Roger Seckerstone, or Seggerston. (See Appendix to CRAIK'S SPENSER in *Knight's Weekly Volumes*, vol. iii. p. 243). The author of this essay, however, has been unable to trace her out. He is informed that a family of that name still resides in one of the southern counties, either Cork or Kerry. It is not improbable that these pages may meet the eye of some one able to trace out the history of the lady in question, and thus either to confirm or to dissipate the conjecture in which Mr. Halpin has indulged. The point is well worthy the antiquarian's research.